

# IGNITION

CHRIS BOYNE

SIMON BROWN

JENNIFER CHERNIACK

KAREN KRAVEN

ÉTIENNE TREMBLAY-TARDIF

BRIAN VIROSTEK

SANDRA VOLNY



MAY 5 – JUNE 11, 2011



Karen Kraven, *This is a Place to Wait Out the Rain*, 2011

## WAYS OF THINKING

*Ways of Thinking* is designed for anyone interested in exploring contemporary art and its exhibition framework. It offers succinct and synthesized information on the exhibition's concept, the artists and the works featured. For the complete version of *Ways of Thinking* that includes bibliographic references, please see our website: [www.ellengallery.concordia.ca/2006/en/](http://www.ellengallery.concordia.ca/2006/en/)

**IGNITION** is an annual exhibition that features recent work by students enrolled in the Master of Fine Arts degree at Concordia University's Studio Arts program. This exhibition provides an up-and-coming generation of artists with a unique opportunity to present ambitious, interdisciplinary works in the professional context of a gallery with a national and international profile. This year, **IGNITION** features seven artists whose practices include print media, photography, audio and video installation.

The works featured in this edition of **IGNITION** were selected by Alissa Firth-Eagland, an independent curator and writer, and Michèle Thériault, Director of the Ellen Art Gallery.



**Chris Boyne** explores the complexity of memory, identity and place in his work titled *blueberry hill*. His combination of still images, text and film reflect the sentiment of storytelling and its relationship to his birthplace of Nova Scotia. **Simon Brown**'s practice as an artist and writer involves subtle and obscure conceptual works that often infiltrate public media formats such as radio or newspaper want ads. Here, he presents a piece based on Michèle Lalonde's famous 1968 poem *Speak White*. **Jennifer Cherniack**'s work plays with the authority of the art historical canon by injecting it with her own personal narrative. *The History of Art According to my Archives* lists hundreds of potential subjects of inquiry based on the artist's own experience in the art world. In her second installation, *I'm Sorry, Jackson*, the artist mythologizes her past connection to Jackson Pollock's work, and its imagined effect on the course of art history. **Karen Kraven** is interested in how hand-made, provisional architecture can affect people's perception of reality. Her sculptural installation *This is a Place to Wait Out the Rain*, works with sound and optical illusion to create a space of tension and uncertainty. **Étienne Tremblay-Tardif**'s installation titled *Propositions pour l'intégration verticale des strates média-historiques de l'échangeur Turcot*, presents his ongoing research into Montréal's infamous Turcot Interchange, symbol of Montréal's modernist urban renewal of the 1960s. Through a confluence of prints, videos, artifacts, publications and found objects from the interchange site, we confront the multiple layers of its historical evolution, its current state of degradation, and the controversial plans for its renewal. **Brian Virostek** presents a dual video projection titled *Reflecting Them and Their Icons Together in Waves*. Images and sounds gathered along a river as it cuts through the city reveal people's connection to it through myth, pollution, leisure and urban development. *SONAR*, by **Sandra Volny**, is an audio-visual portrait of the Harting family, a group of blind siblings who are regularly encountered busking in Montréal's metro stations. Through a series of interviews and performances, *SONAR* weaves a poetic and sensitive discourse on the meeting of voice and the act of listening in a resonant space.

CHRIS BOYNE

*blueberry hill*, 2011  
Chromogenic prints on Dibond, video (Super 8 transferred to video), booklet

I use my own history to explore the complexity of memory, identity and place. Through storytelling I subtly invite my audience to share a sense of self exploration. My work is about nostalgia, regret, and reminiscence.

This project is about sentiment – the sentiment of story telling. I have combined messy little bits of story and memory with fiction to create the work. These bits have been carefully considered. Running aground sailing with the Liston's in Mahone Bay or eating blackberries on Blueberry Hill. Holding breath and thunderstorms and masturbation. All of these bits come together and they are connected through me because they are partly mine.

- EXPLORE
- the relationship that exists between image and the types of meaning that this creates;
  - memory, its role in this work and the ways in which the work addresses it.

SIMON BROWN

*After Speak White*, 2011  
Performance, binder

Simon Brown was born amongst cows, grew up amongst trees and now lives amongst people, buildings and machines. His interest is sparked by the most banal aspects of life as well as the most abstruse manifestations of its essence.

WANTED: Caucasian man with English as mother tongue, from affluent background, preferably with family roots in Montreal, to read Michèle Lalonde's 1968 poem, *Speak White*. To be used in art piece at Leonard and Bina Ellen Gallery. Remuneration negotiable. Please contact [simonatthebrown@gmail.com](mailto:simonatthebrown@gmail.com)

- EXPLORE
- the significance inherent to reactivating Michèle Lalonde's *Speak White*, particularly in a gallery setting;
  - performance and its role in the realization of this work.

JENNIFER CHERNIACK

*The History of Art According to my Archives*, 2010 – present  
35 mm slides, slide projectors, vinyl text

*I'm Sorry, Jackson*, 2010  
Acrylic, glass and dirt on raw canvas, video, posters

My practice combines art history, popular culture and personal experience to create narratives that fall somewhere between fact and fiction. I use popular knowledge about art and culture to reorganize, rearrange and retell well-known stories and ideas. In a humorous and self-reflexive way, my projects speak to ideas around history, mediated technologies, authority, and artistic egos.

*The History of Art According to my Archives* is a list of over 500 suggested titles for chapters or subjects in art history based on personal experience. The project is ongoing and available in a variety of media. It currently exists as a downloadable pdf, a handwritten list, buttons, vinyl wall text and a slide projector installation.

*I'm Sorry, Jackson* is an installation based on a lie that I told about a Jackson Pollock painting during a guided tour at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in 2004. The installation takes interest in the authority of cultural institutions, and speaks to the implications (and the exciting potentials!) of when someone goes off-script.

- EXPLORE
- The artist's use of humour and consider what this might be subverting;
  - Narrative and the relationship that this establishes between artist and viewer.

KAREN KRAVEN

*This is a Place to Wait Out the Rain*, 2011  
Plywood, wood, water, corrugated plastic, glass, Plexiglas, copper pipe, hose, submersible pump, bicycle hooks, work light, audio

The physical space around us is haunted with what it used to look like and burdened by what it wants. Walls go up and come down. Regardless, we feel compelled to believe in the space around us. I am fascinated by the transformative effects small, handmade and temporary architectural structures can have on people. Saunas can make you hallucinate. Fishing huts can make you have visions.

As in cinema, a simple technique for achieving the illusion of rain is not to pour water directly onto the surface of the faux

window in a set, but to pour water on an angled plane, so that the drips slow down. Fake effects in film often look more real than what filming during a real rainstorm would look like. Our mind already knows what we think rain should look like.

*It was a dark and stormy night, strangers lurked, waiting for you to arrive. Snaps of intimidation and snaps of tension become endless drops of water.*

- EXPLORE
- the effect of transformative interventions in our surrounding environment;
  - notions of illusion and reality.

ÉTIENNE TREMBLAY-TARDIF

*Propositions pour l'intégration verticale des strates média-historiques de l'échangeur Turcot*, 2010  
Photolithography, digital printing, etching, screenprinting, relief printing, embossing, video, books, found objects and photocopies

Rooted conceptually in the idea of place and physically in Québec's geopolitical landscape, Étienne Tardif-Tremblay initiates trajectories and displacements. He reflects upon sites where personal and collective identity intersect with cultural objects whose sources are architecture, cinema, and print.

My work on the Turcot Interchange involves shifting focus from questions of vehicular traffic to an exploration of memory and its relationship to historical research, documentation of the interchange structure prior to demolition, and the development of possible alternate histories around this subject. The work presented in this exhibition offers an ideological proposal in opposition to *Transports Québec*'s tabula rasa plan, a plan essentially representing a repetition of Montréal's modernist expansion.

- EXPLORE
- the ways in which this work alludes to cultural identity how it is constructed;
  - the role of the artist and how he positions himself in this questioning of identity.

BRIAN VIROSTEK

*Reflecting Them and Their Icons Together in Waves*, 2011  
Two-channel video installation (Super 8 transferred to video)

I work with film in the unrehearsed world. I have to be attuned to the timing of things happening around me. I select and begin drawing connections as I walk. I am seeking pathways to deeper memory and consciousness. In doing so, I am catapulted into an unanticipated future, releasing the potential of person and place.

I traveled along the river in the city I was living in. I imagined this river cutting through our civilization like it cut through the rock. The camera and microphone recorded the strata of myth, trash, festival, leisure, encroaching nature, and encroaching development. I looked for the extreme tension and release in people's bodies. I was interested in their connection to the river.

- EXPLORE
- time and the connections made with one's physical surroundings through time;
  - the ways in which concepts like time and one's connection to place can be represented visually.

SANDRA VOLNY

*SONAR*, 2011  
Synchronized two-channel video installation, 5.0 surround sound

My research deals with interactions between the body, space, and sound. We inhabit spaces in which sound vibrates, resonates, and then agitates our bodies. We develop in auditory environments that affect our emotional and behavioral experience of our surroundings. I am interested in resonant surfaces, beyond the visible, that organize and delimit the real. Through sound and listening I reflect on our perception of time and our relationship to memory.

Based on interviews and performances with the Hartings, a family of blind singers, the experimental documentary *SONAR* weaves a sensitive and poetic narrative about the meeting point between voice and hearing in a resonant space. I explore the phenomenon of "human echolocation," the ability to orient oneself in space through sound. *SONAR* functions both as sonar, a technique employing underwater sound propagation that allows boats to navigate and detect other vessels, and as a metaphor for the act of remembering. Searching our memories, we emit a sound pulse into space. What does the returning sound pulse tell us about our surroundings and ourselves?

- EXPLORE
- the ways in which this work investigates the relationship between sound, space, and the body;
  - the conclusions that result from this investigation.



## **Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery**

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